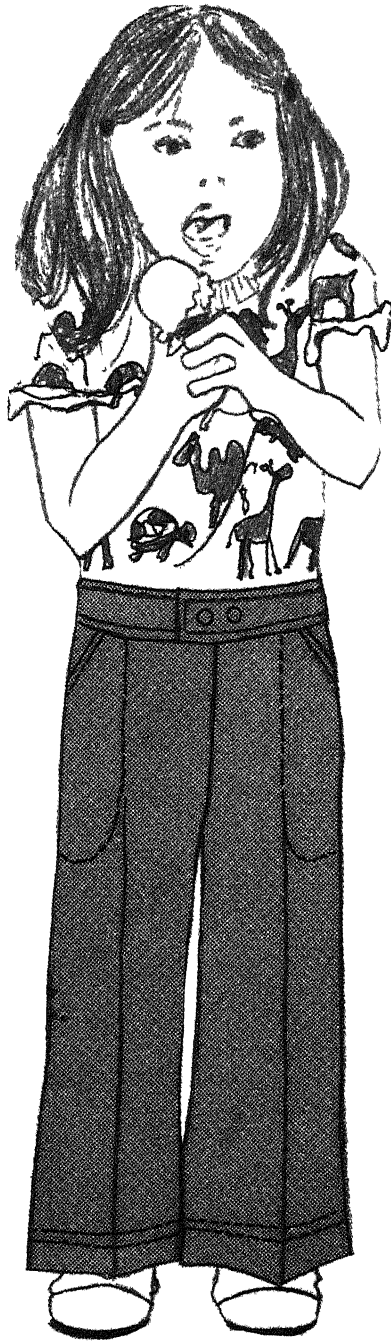


CHILDREN'S CLOTHES



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Children do care what they wear—they are interested in clothes. Young children want clothes similar to those of Dad or Mom, or big sister. Older boys and girls want to dress like their playmates. They don't want to be dressed in clothes that are noticeably different.

Permitting children to wear clothes they like may prevent some hurt feelings and resentment. Clothes add to a child's happiness, poise and self-confidence, and help him become a well-adjusted adult. Clothes are personal and the child sees clothes as a part of himself.

Favorable comments about a person's clothes—either a child or an adult—increase satisfaction and clothing preferences. A child's clothing preferences are signs of choice making and growth toward independence. He needs to be at ease and comfortable in his clothes.

Give children opportunities to help choose their clothes at an early age. Of course, you or another adult should make the first selections of several equally satisfactory garments. Then the child can make the final choice.

Consider children's needs as well as their likes. Some clothes must give protection and warmth; others need to be cool. They should allow for growth and activity, and should be easy to launder and require very little special care. Self-help features encourage children to develop initiative and self-reliance. Safe clothing is a must.

Like adults, children need clothes for various occasions—for play, school, sleeping and dress-up. They need clothes for different seasons, too.

PLANNING

Plan carefully before you choose or buy clothing. Planning is as essential to obtain a satisfactory and becoming wardrobe for a child as it is for an adult. The type and number of garments in the child's wardrobe will depend on the season, your care facilities, and the child's health, age and activities. Since children grow rapidly, keep the number of clothes in use at any one time to a minimum. Coordinated separates that can be worn in different combinations give variety, yet involve few clothes.

Check the child's clothes you now have before planning new selections:

- Does the child like the garments?
- Are other children wearing similar clothes?
- Which colors does he enjoy wearing?
- What styles are most becoming?
- Does he need new clothes now?
- Does he already have too many of one kind?
- Can some be repaired or remodeled to give added service?
- Which fabrics are most satisfactory? Did the trimming wear as well as the garment?
- Does quality or quantity give "more" for the money?
- Which characteristics would you like to try to get in the new garment?

STYLES

While fashions for children's clothes are similar to those of adults, style features should relate to the child's needs. Garments with simple lines and built-in trim are not only functional and easy to care for, but they also have a special touch that is appealing and attractive to the child. For instance, contrasting fabric trim and rickrack securely attached to a pocket can be colorful and sturdy.

Ruffles or fabric that matches or contrasts with the garment, or bindings that encase raw edges can be effective as well as decorative finishes. However, fussy adornments compete with the child's charm. Dangling trims hamper the child's activity and may even be a safety hazard.

Children's clothing styles mimic those worn by adults. A little boy may be wearing slacks and a coordinating sport jacket similar to Dad's. The outfit may be completed with shoes, print or plain shirt and, possibly, a tie like Dad's. He may be wearing a single- or double-breasted all-weather coat, too. His clothes may feature a leisure suit with a shirt-type jacket or a smart battle jacket, and matching pants. Sweaters may be bulky or fine knit and lightweight with crew-, boat- or V-neck versions.

Girls, too, wear coordinates just like Mother. Jackets to match or to coordinate with skirts or pants may be of waist-length style, fitted or loose-shirted style, or of a loose, unbuttoned Chanel type.

The girls may wear sweaters, in a wide variety of styles, alone or with jackets or blouses for a layered effect. Sometimes a vest makes a fashionable addition to be worn with or without the jacket. Tunic or simple pull-over tops or T-shirts are other choices. Jumpers can be another useful and attractive wardrobe addition. Blazers are equally popular for girls and boys to coordinate outfits.

Many dresses with full skirts continue to be popular for the young set, particularly for dress-up. Ruffles, fabrics and trim contribute to the quaint old-fashioned-look dress, perhaps with a detachable apron or pinafore. Dresses with no defined waistline in simple styles are good choices for comfortable, active wear.

Plaids, checks, stripes and solids in both bold and pastel colors are available for children's clothes. Motifs used in printed fabrics are varied—medallion, Early American, mini-flowers and animals. Some comic characters are popular, too.

Remember that simple and appealing styles are keys to garment selection. Choose clothing for children that is attractive and that allows for self-help, for growth, for comfort, for physical activity and for safety.

SELF-HELP FEATURES

Clothes can have a number of features that give children enjoyment and help them become more independent. A preschooler, like other individuals, has a need to become independent—to help himself—and dressing and undressing himself helps increase a child's self-confidence. A child can dress and undress himself if the clothes are simple in style and easy to get on and off.

Try to make dressing and undressing an easy and happy experience



for your child. Encourage him as soon as he shows interest in doing this for himself. Self-help features that you may want to look for include:

Easy-to-Manage Openings

- Front or easy-to-reach openings in same location on different garments.
- Roomy or expandable neck openings.
- Minimum number of openings.
- Elasticized inserts at waistlines and rib-knit bands at necklines that stretch—and have no fasteners.

Easy-to-Manage Fasteners

- Medium-size round buttons—at least the size of a dime.
- Buttons reasonably far apart if in a long row.
- Buttonholes, neither too large nor too small, rather than loops.
- Extra large pull-tabs on zippers.
- Large, wide metal hooks or gripper snaps easy to manage—not small hooks and eyes.
- Loop-and-hook tape fasteners.
- Buckles without a tongue in footwear.

Other self-help features include roomy sleeves and markings to identify garment features. Kimono or raglan sleeve styles have wide armholes that make a garment easy to put on. Also, help your child by pointing out, or making markings to tell, front from back in garments. Markings may be used to tell left from right for footwear.

FABRIC

Children's clothes come in a variety of fabrics. In fact, you will see clothes in an array of fabrics from which to choose. But keep in mind some of the following guidelines to help you decide: comfortable, colorful, coordinated; plus care that's easy and characteristics that count.

Comfortable. Look for soft, smooth-against-the-skin, absorbent, lightweight and flexible fabrics. Fabrics that are soft, absorbent and smooth against the skin will be comfortable and will not irritate a child's tender skin. Clothes made of flexible and lightweight fabrics are essential for the active child. Heavy, bulky fabrics create weight that tires the child and interferes with a child's movements.

Colorful. Young children enjoy and often prefer bright colors such as the primary ones: red, blue, yellow. And the preschoolers enjoy decorative effects such as animal motifs, boats and other things familiar to them. Older elementary children tend to select pastel or less intense colors and simple styles or decorations. Studies show that color of clothing is very important in children's preferences. Therefore, be alert to your child's color preferences.

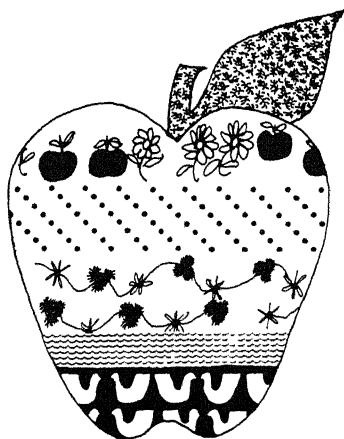
Pattern motif, too, should be in scale to the child's size. Dainty or small designs go better with "small people" than do bold, large prints, checks, plaids and stripes.

Coordinated. Fabrics help relate a garment to the other parts of the outfit. Choose the color and texture in both garment and trim that coordinate, or go with, shoes, coats and other garments to be worn with it. Consider coordinating fabrics for garments to mix and match with other wardrobe items.

Care that's easy. Since children play actively and get clothes dirty, minimum-care fabrics are much in demand for their clothes. Look for label terms such as completely washable, minimum ironing, soil resistant, wrinkle resistant or durable-press.

In recent government market surveys, mothers indicated that the children's garments they desired were machine washable, required no ironing and maintained shape after such care. Look for laundry and care requirements on the permanent care label attached to the garment. Often, you will find the care label at or near the neckline or waistline. On packaged items, check the package wrapper too.

Remember that simple garment styles and sturdy construction make care easier, too. Wrinkles and soil are seen less readily on patterned fabrics than on solid-color fabrics.



Characteristics. Look for characteristics that count. . . for performance and quality. Be a label reader to see if the garment fabric is:

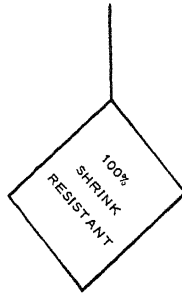
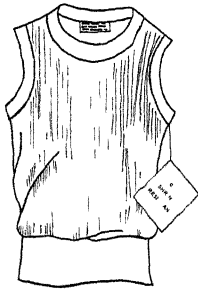
- Colorfast; that is, the color stays the same and doesn't fade or run when washed, cleaned or worn.
- Shrink resistant or preshrunk. Choose, if possible, garments with fabric that will not shrink more than 1 percent.
- Finished with special finishes such as for water repellency, stain resistance and wrinkle resistance.

Look at the fabric itself to check quality, to help you decide if the garment will keep its shape and will wear and perform well.

- Look to see if fabric is firmly woven or closely knitted. Loosely woven or knitted fabric with pulled or distorted loops may shrink, stretch and lose shape.
- Check to determine if fabric is "on grain"; for example, woven fabrics should have lengthwise yarns at right angles to crosswise yarns, knits should have the lengthwise or vertical wales or ribs at or about right angles to crosswise wales rather than twisted or distorted.

Put all these fabric "C's" together: comfort, color, coordinates, care and characteristics. Select the best combination possible from the choices available. For instance, vary fabric to meet the need or purpose, such as party or play. A child is not interested in a dainty, fragile garment if it means he or she must sacrifice comfort or normal play to wear it. Likewise, while a very heavyweight denim may be sturdy and wear well, the garment made from it may be too stiff, heavy and uncomfortable for a child to wear. Firmly woven and knitted fabrics can be sturdy and wear well and be relatively lightweight.

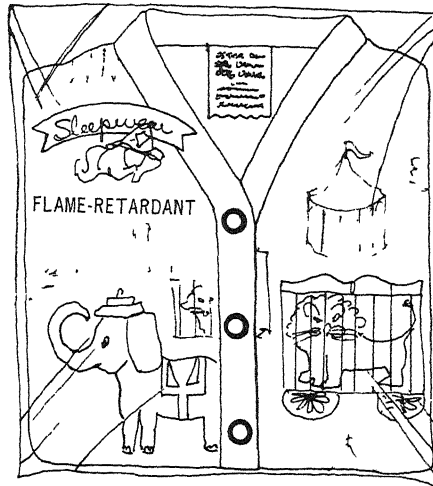
Some commonly used fibers for children's clothes are cotton or cotton/polyester blends in fabrics such as denim, poplin, kettletcloth, chambray, lightweight corduroy, terry, batiste, crinkle and embossed fabrics. Knits, too, are comfortable and flexible. Nylon, polyester and acrylic are other fibers used in children's clothes and are available in various woven and knitted easy-care fabrics.



SAFETY

When buying clothing for your child, be sure to consider fabric and style features that will protect him from weather, discomfort, play equipment and fire hazards. Select appropriate apparel to protect the child in wet and cold weather. Avoid loose, ill-fitting clothing, dangling ties or scarfs that interfere with play, or items that can catch on play equipment. Be sure hoods attached to garments do not obstruct the child's vision.

In short, sturdy clothes appropriate for the activity help to meet the safety needs of a child.



FLAME-RETARDANT CLOTHING

Another important safety feature is flame-retardant clothing. "FR" or flame-resistant fabrics are those that do not ignite or burn as readily as ordinary fabrics. Research results indicate that more than three-fourths of the mothers questioned in surveys said they were very interested in having children's clothing treated to resist flame (at no sacrifice in quality) and were willing to pay extra for this feature.

All children's sleepwear, sizes 0 to 14, must be flame retardant as required under sleepwear standards issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Flame-retardant garments in other categories are becoming more readily available; thus children's dresses and some play clothes are flame retardant.

Check garment labels, wrappers, hang tags and store displays for the letters "FR" or the words, "Flame resistant" or "Flame retardant" to identify FR apparel. Also be sure to check the care requirements given on the permanent care label. Once you have selected a product, you must follow the procedure given to maintain the FR benefits of the fabric. The care differs, depending on the product, so read each care label.

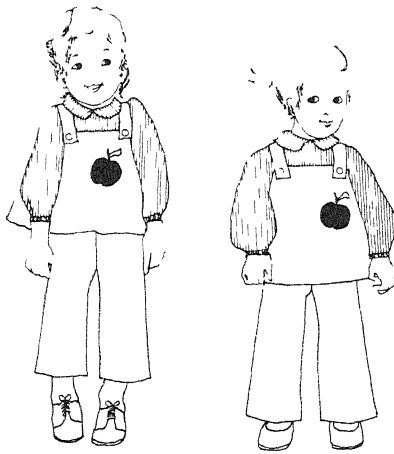
SIZE

When in the market for children's clothing, do you shop by guess, by age or by body measurements?

The age system of sizing children's garments is unreliable. Children of the same age often are of very different size and body build. Stating size by age is no assurance of having correctly fitting clothes. Instead, buy by size, not age.

In selecting the size of a garment, consider the allowances or variation in sizing by various manufacturers, the cut or style of the garment, the fabrics and the body proportion or shape of the child.

Standards for sizing children's clothes are recommended by the U.S. Department of Commerce for use by the garment industry—on a voluntary basis. The combination of height and weight, plus additional body measurements, are used to determine sizing for children. You will see size classifications and size numbers when you shop.



—*Size classifications* for children currently are “infants,” “toddlers,” “children,” “boys” and “girls.” You may also see the children’s classification broken down into “little girls” and “little boys.” These size groupings help to provide garments to meet the physical growth and changes in children. For instance, the infant and toddler garments are cut to allow for diapers. Although toddlers’ and children’s size measurements overlap, a child’s size 3 may be longer than a toddler 3 to accommodate the difference in posture and slimness of the more mature child as compared to a toddler.

—*Size number* is based on the height, weight and body measurements of children. Size is given by a number such as 2, 3, 4 or, in case of infants, by weight. Sometimes letters such as S, M, L or XL are used as sizing. Some reference to body measurement or number size is usually given to show a comparable number size to the letter size.

The following chart gives the standard measures available for use by garment manufacturers for children’s clothes, with sizes for toddlers and children 2 to 6X (7).

TODDLERS

| Size | Height | Weight | Chest | Waist | Hip or Seat |
|------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 1 | 31 | 25 | 20 | 20 | |
| 2 | 34 | 29 | 21 | 20½ | |
| 3 | 37 | 34 | 22 | 21 | |
| 4 | 40 | 38 | 23 | 21½ | |

CHILDREN

| | | | | | Boys | Girls |
|------------|----|----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| 2 | 34 | 29 | 21 | 20½ | 21 | 21½ |
| 3 | 37 | 34 | 22 | 21 | 22 | 22½ |
| 4 | 40 | 38 | 23 | 21½ | 23 | 23½ |
| 5 | 43 | 44 | 24 | 22 | 24 | 24½ |
| 6 | 46 | 49 | 25 | 22½ | 25 | 25½ |
| (Girls) 6X | 48 | 54 | 25½ | 23 | | 26½ |
| (Boys) 7 | 48 | 54 | 25¾ | 23 | 25¾ | |

Changes in sizing standards are currently being considered by the Department of Commerce to revise the sizing and modify classifications to include the following: infants, toddlers and (little) girls and boys with sizes from 0 to 6X (7). Some garments are currently sized by these designations.

Many children's-wear manufacturers make proportioned and specially sized clothes for children. Sizes 2 to 6X/7 garments are available in regular and slim proportions. Sizes from 7/7½ for larger boys and girls are available in regular, slim and chubby or husky. The height measurement for a given size will be the same for regular, slim or chubby, but the weight and width will vary. For instance, the waist measurement in slims is generally about 2 inches smaller than regular, but the length measurement of the garment may be the same as a regular in the same size made by the same manufacturer. Look for size charts that accompany garments to compare body measurements.

While voluntary size standards have been established for children's clothes, sizes may vary from garment to garment. The size 4 pants from one manufacturer may not be the same size 4 from another manufacturer. The variation may be caused by a difference in span of body measurements for sizing used by the manufacturer, or to styling. Or some manufacturers may not follow the standard established. Thus, expect to find some children's clothes that are sized about the same but also be aware that some garments sized by the same number may vary in fit and cut.

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| WHAT'S MY SIZE? | Date | Height _____ |
| | | Weight _____ |
| | | Shoulder _____ |
| | | Chest _____ |
| | | Waist _____ |
| | | Hip or _____ |
| | | Seat _____ |
| | | Length of: |
| | | Coat _____ |
| | | Jacket _____ |
| | | Dress _____ |
| | | Skirt _____ |
| | | Pants _____ |
| Name | Shirt _____ | |
| | Blouse _____ | |
| | Sleeve _____ | |

You will be more likely to get the best size for your child when you use measurements as a guide. List the child's measurements and take these with you when you shop. Measurements of correctly fitted garments are also useful. The chart form shows body measurements helpful for selecting various garments for your child's wardrobe. Remember to take measurements regularly to have accurate and up-to-date measurements that correspond to your child's growth.

Compare body measurements with manufacturers' size charts. Or measure the garment to be purchased. (Be sure garment is fastened before measuring.) Then compare the measurements of the garment you are planning to purchase with your child's measurements plus a fitting allowance. Get a blouse, shirt or dress about 3 inches bigger than child's chest measurement. Get a coat or jacket about 6 inches bigger than child's chest measurement. The waist will generally measure 1 inch more for dresses, skirts and pants.

Become familiar with sizing among brands. You should be able to buy without expecting wide variation in fit from one garment size 6 to another size 6 within a brand. Know size classifications and market choices and buy the appropriate size according to your child's measurements.



Use measurements as a guide; then hold up the clothes you think are properly sized against child's body to approximate fit. Have the child try on the clothes when possible. Remember, guessing at the size may cause you extra trouble and trips as well as disappointment. And have you tried to get a too small or too large garment off a child who wanted to keep it?

FIT AND GROWTH FEATURES

Clothes that fit comfortably and allow for growth are important features in buying children's clothing. Check for a good fit because fit is essential for the child's comfort, safety and appearance.

A well-fitted garment for a child is relatively loose, not snug. It allows for movement—bending, stooping, reaching, running and climbing. The garment does not bind at the neck, waist or armhole. Neither should the garment be so wide that shoulder seams will droop over the shoulder. The neck opening must be large enough to slip easily over the head. The weight of the garment should hang from the shoulders, particularly for young children. For coats or jackets, check for ample room to fit over bulk of garments worn under it.

For separates, select shirts and blouses long enough to stay tucked in, and pants and skirts snug enough at the waist to stay in place. However, avoid restrictive or too tight elastic. Be sure the crotch in pants is long enough.

Buying clothes that are too large for a child is false economy. Too large, uncomfortable clothes may make a child feel unhappy, defensive or inferior. The too-large clothes are not in proportion to the child. The clothes that are sizes too large are apt to be faded and worn by the time they fit correctly.

But you can select for growth. For instance, you can purchase longer length pants and take a crosswise tuck behind a cuff or make a deep hem. Thus, garment features rather than an extra size should allow for growth. Look for garments with growth features such as the following:

- Lengthwise gathers, shirring, pleats or tucks that may be released.
- Partially elasticized or adjustable tab-fastener waistlines.
- Crosswise let-out tuck at the waistline.
- High, low or no waistline seam in dresses.
- Raglan or cut-in-one sleeves with no armhole to bind.
- Roomy armholes, no sleeves and sleeves without tight cuffs or bands.
- Collarless necklines and large neck opening.
- Adjustable cuffs on pants and sleeves.
- Adjustable straps on pants, sun-dresses, jumpers, etc.
- Wide seam allowances for some extra length or width.
- Ample hems chain-stitched for ease in letting down.
- Ruffles set on a skirt that may be moved down to add length.
- Garments made of stretch or knit fabric.

WORKMANSHIP

Children's clothes should be well-constructed and sturdy; they have to withstand hard wear and frequent washing. Short, even stitches are a sign of good workmanship. Double or triple stitching increases the serviceability of play clothes. Double or triple stitching increases the serviceability of play clothes. Look for smoothness of finish, even in garments at low prices.

Avoid garments that show signs of being made carelessly, with raw seams at points that may rub tender skin. Bulky seams may chafe, too. Seams should be flat, even in width and finished to prevent raveling. Hems should be flat, even in width and securely stitched. Fasteners should be firmly attached to withstand tugging and pulling. And look for buttonholes that are firm and closely stitched. Secure interfacings add to the general appearance and ease of care.

All points of strain should be reinforced — placket ends, pocket corners, button and buttonholes, knees, elbows and armholes. Flat pockets and trimmings, securely attached, won't catch on furniture and play equipment.

Check the cut of the garment. It will hang well, hold its shape and be comfortable if the cut is on the grain of the fabric. The yarns, or grain, unless designed otherwise, should be straight horizontally and vertically.

Accurate matching of plaids, stripes and checks at seams and other joinings is a sign of quality. Trimming at structural points of the garment, firmly attached, not just tacked on or glued on, also indicates quality.

Don't be alarmed if you can't find all these characteristics in a garment. If the garment is becoming, appropriate and well-fitting, you may still decide to buy it. You may have the time, energy and ability to re-work buttonholes, re-stitch and finish seams, replace fasteners and trims, or to otherwise improve the garment workmanship.

SUMMING UP

Clothes are important to your child. Plan and select a satisfactory wardrobe to meet your child's various activity, growth and developmental needs. Select garments considering these features:

- Simple, comfortable styles appropriate for play or dress.
- Self-help features.
- Comfortable, colorful fabrics that are easy care.
- Correct size and good fit.
- Growth features—plan for growth through garment styling.
- Workmanship for smoothness and comfort, appearance, and sturdiness.

The fabric, the garment itself, and label information will help you learn more about what you are buying. Buy with the child's needs in mind.

All educational programs and activities conducted by the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service are available to all potential clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color or national origin.

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